

The Star of the East

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE IN CONNECTION WITH

VICTORIA PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, APPROACH ROAD.

Minister :
REV.

Public Worship :

SUNDAYS—

Morning at 11.
Evening at 6.30
Mission Service, 8 p.m.

Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

Sunday Schools :

VICTORIA HALL—

Morning at 10.
Afternoon at 2.15.

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Morning at 10.
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The attention of our Readers is called to the Advertisements.

The Star of the East,

MAGAZINE OF THE
Victoria Park Congregational Church.

Vol. XX. No. 12.

DECEMBER 1928.

TWOPENCE

BAZAAR

Don't forget the Date—

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8th.

In Victoria Hall, at 3.15 p.m., prompt.

Opened by Mrs. H. L. NATHAN, J.P., L.C.C.

(Accompanied by MAJOR H. L. NATHAN).

Chairman—GEORGE J. JONES, Esq., of Ilford.

Soloist—MISS DOROTHY COX.

TO ALL FRIENDS of the Church, whether of few years or many years standing, we make this last urgent appeal. The Bazaar to be held on the above date is one of our best efforts to augment the funds of the Church and now it is upon us, we urge all friends to rally round and keep the old Church going. Our need is great and we are confident that your help will be generous.

Good Value. BUY! BUY!! BUY!!! Moderate Prices.

Fancy and Domestic articles, Christmas presents, Christmas cards, etc. Christmas Crackers, Up-to-date Stationery, High class Confectionery, Fruit and Flowers, Bulbs for your Garden, Perfumery, etc., etc.

Refreshments served all the Evening. Teas and suppers at a moderate Tariff.

Visit the the Side Shows—ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR.

Friends old and new—We want YOU.

THANK YOU

For all you have done. For all you are doing. For all you hope to do.
Please send your gifts to Stallholders, c/o Mr. Speed, 96, Bonner Road, or to Secretaries
not later than **Friday, December 7th.**

Workers Wanted.

In all departments of our Church activities more workers are urgently required if the standard is to be maintained.

Dr. Chalmers once said "the happiness of life consists in something to do." I venture to think that we all desire to be happy, so let us put our energies to the plough in God's Kingdom and then the highest form of happiness will be our portion.

A story is told of a conceited young Englishman who went to America and complained that he found no "Upper Classes" there. An American asked what he meant by "Upper Classes," and he explained that he referred to those who had never done any work, nor their fathers before them. "Oh!" said the American, "we have a great many of that class here, but we call them by a different name; we call them tramps."

Let us see to it that we enlist in the ranks of the faithful persevering labourers, who at times may be faint—yet pursuing.

Who lags for dread of daily work,
And his appointed task would shirk,
Commits a folly and a crime,
A clog upon the wheels of time.

Congratulations.

We offer congratulations to one of our deacons (Mr. A. Ackerman) on being re-elected a member of the Hackney Borough Council. Also to one of our Trustees (Mr. W. Rawles J.P.) on being elected as Alderman of the Bethnal Green Borough Council.

BAZAAR.

Bulbs for Sale.

Guaranteed to produce lovely flowers in the early spring.

Marriage.

On Sunday, November 18th. at Victoria Park Congregational Church by Rev. W. Sheers.

Fred H. J. Sturgeon to Henrietta S. N. Anspach.

Both of these young people have been

very earnest workers in connection with our Church for a good number of years and we all unite in wishing them a very happy married life.

Preachers for December.

2. Rev. D. A. DAVIES, (Norbury).
9. Rev. E. P. POWELL, M.A. (Northwood)
16. Rev. H. CHANDLER.
Middleton, Mass. U.S.A.
- 23 at 11 a.m. Rev. W. SHEERS.
6.30 p.m. Christmas Music by the Choir.
- 30.

Victoria Hall Sunday School.

Mr. PHILIP RITTE

(The eminent Tenor)

Miss DORRIE COURTNEY

(England's Leading Lady Solo Banjoist)

To have the pleasure of listening to the above distinguished Artistes in Victoria Hall, in addition to THE GOLDEN PIPPINS CONCERT PARTY, was a treat that was worthy of the occasion and the object for which the money was required.

There was quite a good audience, too, and the explanation of this is that members of every organisation connected with our Church evidently desired to encourage the Teachers and Officers of the School in the good work they are doing on Sundays and practically every-day of the week. And this expression of confidence, and the inspiring speech of Mr. George Eickhoff, who acted as Chairman, not only encouraged the school workers but has had excellent reactions in quarters that I cannot mention just now. Thus do we involuntarily influence each other!

The Girls' Club took a block of seats. The Guides and Brownies worked and sold tickets. Mr. Narborough and his class helped us considerably as Musical Director and Stewards respectively. The Men's Club came along in force; the Band of Hope and Twig Folly friends also helped, and Mr. Davis with the Choir joined with the Thrift Club in rendering useful service.

But I must not forget to mention that many old Officials and Teachers came to our assistance, and some of Mr. Ward's old Bible Class remembered the "grand old days of yore" and sent some very welcome contributions. Many friends from the Wesleyan Church opposite patronised the concert and a few local gentlemen also cheered us by their presence.

In conclusion I should like to say that so far as the success of the concert was due to my appeal on behalf of the children I can only express my deep appreciation of the response and am exceedingly grateful to everyone that helped us in any way whatever.

Through the departure of Mrs. Winnicott (*née* Miss Millie Clark) to take up residence in Trinidad, where her husband holds an appointment, we lose the services of a very valued teacher.

Her large Class of boys was one of which any teacher could be proud. Last year in addition to her ordinary duties she undertook the teaching of the junior scholars for the Scripture Examination and the results were eminently satisfactory.

As it was my privilege the other Sunday to present Millie with a handsome set of carvers, etc., subscribed for by the teachers and officers of the School, I wish to place on record our hearty appreciation and best thanks for all her services.

May good health, strength and prosperity follow Mr. and Mrs. Winnicott in their new sphere of activity is the sincere wish of all her old colleagues.

J. W.

BAZAAR EFFORT.

Victoria Hall Sunday School will do its best, but our workers are few and their spare time is very limited, and some of our keenest workers simply cannot pull the weight they used to move with ease.

Our Secretary will run the Confectionery Stall.

Miss Elsie Forrest will sell Christmas Crackers—a new departure—so please save your orders and help her.

The other officers and teachers are arranging a Miscellaneous Stall of useful and fancy articles.

Who will send a gift for V.H.S.S. Stall?

If you send a Postcard to Mrs. Ward at Victoria Hall she will arrange for the gifts to be collected—weight or distance no object.

You will look out something for us, won't you?—Thanks ever so much.

V. H. Y. M. A.

Bazaar. As usual the activity of our members on the night of the Bazaar will be centred chiefly on the sideshows and a large number of fellows have been deputed to see to the running of their respective shows.

Concert. It has already been decided to give our Annual Entertainment, and March 23rd 1929 has been fixed as the date of this auspicious occasion. This is the Saturday prior to Good Friday and YOU are asked to keep this date open. A novel departure from our usual type of show has been decided upon, but more detail will of course, be given later.

Boys' Club. A Club for the older boys of the Sunday School has been started and meets on Monday evening. We are pleased to say it is running very satisfactorily, about 30 youngsters turning up each night, so far.

An optimist sees an opportunity in every difficulty. A pessimist sees a difficulty in every opportunity.

Found—a Fur.

On night of Sunday School Concert—will owner please apply for same to Mr. Ward.

The Sun's Corner.

A very interesting and memorable evening was spent on Saturday, November 17th, at the Broad Street Restaurant, when twenty or more of our fellows with their fiancée's and friends made the presentation of a gold watch to their old leader and a small present to his wife for their many sacrifices and much work for us in the past. I have in my possession a letter that Mr. A. Cox has written to express his thankfulness and appreciation for the gifts to both his wife and himself.

We hear that a combined dinner will be held shortly for the three Bible Classes and I sincerely hope that this will be a great success and a step in the right direction for greater combined work in our Bible Classes.

Interesting was Friday, November 16th, when an old friend addressed our Debating Society on "Socialism." The Subject was opened by an able man and discussed to an appreciable extent by the mixed audience.

Our class is very pleased to see the growing of the good feeling between all that we have always known existed in a very large measure. Those behind the scenes who are helping we would take this opportunity to thank you.

I take this opportune time on behalf of my class to thank all the speakers who have come to our class with their interesting and very instructive addresses. We conclude wishing the Bazaar a great success.

S. H. KILBEY.

STOP PRESS.

IMPORTANT
FOR THE MOMENT

A BAZAAR



THE HOME MISSIONARY WORK *of the* LONDON CONGREGATIONAL UNION

A QUARTERLY BULLETIN



December, 1928.

From The Chair

MY visit to Canada suggested several interesting reflections. It revealed once more how great is the romance, prestige, and moral influence of "London, England," overseas. It showed how outstanding, among the English ministers who visit the Dominion, both in their ability and their dignity, have been the Congregationalists. The names of Dr. Norwood, Revs. John Bevan and Leyton Richards, and several are to-day household words. It revived in my mind the desire for the closing of our religious ranks in England—not at first by corporate union, for conditions here are different and the Canadian experiment is not yet through all its stages, but by some such general "working arrangement," to begin with, as obtains among the Free Churches in Extension in Middlesex and Greater London. It also suggested to me that there may be compensations in our constant state of struggle over here. Full churches and coffers running over have, on second sight, their perils. It is possible to perish, like the irresistible and unchallenged mammoth, from lack of a fight for existence. Therefore, despite the sympathy of some of our brethren who have migrated to richer and easier pastorates than England can offer, I am inclined to wonder if our courage and devotion are

not nourished by the fight against apathy and penury which is our portion. "London, England," may not be able to provide in each church armies of paid helpers, or to announce triumphantly that its campaign for £80,000 has already produced more than was asked, but it remains "London, England"—perhaps the greatest of all the strategic centres in Christ's struggle for the world.

* * *

Nor can we say that "the struggle nought availeth." I resumed my duties as your Chairman by visiting Coverdale Church in the Commercial Road. I had a look at the neighbourhood first and

decided that religious work amid this ocean of depression and squalor was like Mrs. Partington's attempt to sweep back the Atlantic with her immortal mop. Like many of my decisions, time compelled revision which was gladly made. Coverdale has had for over twenty years the devoted service, as minister, of a day school



"Coverdale" Scripture Class, 1928.
Winners of East London Auxiliary S.S. Union's Scripture Shield
for twelve successive years.

teacher. Retired from his profession, he still carries on his ministry. Enthusiasm, youth, joy, comradeship, make the atmosphere of the place. About forty young folk compose an orchestra which we might do worse than invite some day to a Union Assembly, and still another group make up the Choir. My

Home Missionary Work of the London Congregational Union

task was to preside at a Harvest Thanksgiving, but it included a little presentation to a bride and bridegroom, both of whom belonged to the Sunday School and therein had grown to maturity and each other. "The home they make will be very different from either of the homes from which they came," somebody said. That sentence would bear lots of thought, so I thought lots. It would be a home linked to Church and Sunday School, a home in which children would be born to God-fearing, Christ-loving parents, a home in which the love and tenderness of family life are fed from the spiritual springs of religious service and faith. Coverdale is making homes like that, transforming and redeeming London households and lives, laying its hand in glorious resolve on the future to claim it for Jesus Christ. Coverdale, like Watney Street, is turning darkness into light every week—because the London Congregational Union makes it possible for its doors to stay open by making grants of money it has to trust its constituency to find.

* * *

All the East End is like that. Only a few evenings later I was at Canning Town. There was the same atmosphere, the same brave ministry, the same singing by the Choir—singing that had the real red blood of Christian experience behind it—the same realisation that here at any rate "organised religion" was doing its job, and enjoying itself in doing it. That is not to say that the building is not crying out for redecoration, that the people are not poor, the minister underpaid, the vestries inadequate—all these things are so. Lots of places "simply could not go on" under the disadvantages of some of these East End churches, far less greet their Chairman with a smiling enthusiasm which sends him home glad and proud

to be a Congregationalist in "London, England." The Secretary read his statement and there was a wistful note in it. If the London Congregational Union ceased to help them, they could not continue their work; financially, they were constantly "up against it," and ways and means occupied the attention of every deacons' meeting. I didn't reply that that was a habit of deacons' meetings—

sometimes when it wasn't necessary and the discussion of other things was—but I did say something like this:—"The London Congregational Union sends you love and encouragement and assures you that many things will have to close down before it withdraws anything of its full support from these front-line trenches in the East End. We have promised that no schemes of Church Extension shall diminish our sense of obligation to inner London, and to that the word of the Union—and not only its transient Chairman—is pledged. For the rest, I have never heard it suggested that this church, or any like it, should be closed; I do not believe any such suggestion would ever be made; but, if it were made, there would be many of us who would fight it to the last ditch." It was something to hear that full church—for the area was full—of poor people cheer that pronouncement, to see a sort of dread—who had been frightening him?—pass from the face of the Church Secretary,

and to be able to say on behalf of London Congregationalists: "We are with you." But are we? With a deficit of £2,300 and an annual discrepancy of £1,200, are we with them? Your response to our appeals will show whether you are and whether you believe in missions in "London, England," in something like the same way as you believe in them at the ends of the earth.

* * *

There am I in the Midst of Them

*THOUGH only few are gathered in the Name
The Church of God is there :
One, catholic and holy, though the place
Of meeting be but bare.*

*For in the midst the living Lord fulfils
His promise to His own ;
And to a small and feeble fellowship
He does not come alone.*

*The glorious Apostolic company,
The Prophets' goodly band,
The Martyrs' noble army, and the Saints
Of every age and land ;*

*All these are in His train, and thus He brings
To meet with two or three
The full communion of the Church redeemed
From all humanity.*

*So, when we praise, our frugal note is joined
Unto the vaster song
Of all the hosts of heaven and earth who still
The theme of grace prolong.*

*And when we pray our halting pleas are wrought
Into the ages' prayer ;
The intercessions of all faithful souls
With ours are offered there.*

*And at the table of the Lord we keep
A glad and blessed tryst
With all the holy living, and the dead,
Who live for aye in Christ.*

W. C. P.

Home Missionary Work of the London Congregational Union

The work in the East End is so economical too—too economical. It ought to have the brightest churches to house such a bright Christianity, but it rubs along with stained walls and many a broken fitting—save where the people themselves do what they can. Musicians work for nothing and parsons for little more, and everybody is poor. I wonder if that's why everybody is happy. I once heard a sermon on "The Radiance of Christianity" given by an eminent D.D., who was the most lugubrious advertisement of it one could imagine, but there is nothing lacking in radiance down in these poor churches. Why don't you go and see them? It would do you worlds of good, and you might carry back to your own church something of the fresh, unstarched fervour that comes from what I would again describe as "the front-line trenches of London Congregationalism." My year of office will soon be over and I shall return to be the working minister of a church which has, throughout this year, been exceedingly patient, but there are at least two aspects of our work I should like to be allowed to continue to share—if only as a friend—and one is that of these brave, dirty churches of brave, clean fighters in the East End.

Another is the revival at Markham Square, Chelsea. Adjectives fail as one tries to describe the transformation that has taken place there. Once more the outside of the building is imposing and the inside, with fresh paint and electric light, is a church in which anyone might feel glad and grateful to worship. With sacrificial generosity, aided by outside interest, the little band of people have paid every bill and have a manageable debt of a few hundreds lent free of charge. There is once more Congregationalism, worthy of the place, situated in Chelsea. The Recognition of the Rev. J. B. Binns, M.A., was graced by the presence of one of the Chairmen of the Union of England and Wales, while the Chairman-elect preached the sermon. The evening meeting was conspicuous for the cordiality of the Anglicans, the affection of West Dulwich, the magnificent expectancy of Chelsea, and the simple sincerity always so characteristic of Mr. and Mrs. Binns. The welcome to the pastorate, given by Mr. Davies, who is nearly ninety years old, who led the Church's

splendid effort by gifts and personal service of an amazing sort, and who had welcomed the six preceding ministers, will long remain in the memories of those present. I have been informed that I have been adopted as the Church's "god-father," though I think such an office is a denominational innovation which would cause something like panic in several committees unable to discover a "precedent" for it. It is a position I shall be proud to retain, for, if I could choose two tiny monuments to be erected in memory of my Chairmanship, one would be inscribed "Office-bearers' Association" and the other "Markham Square." The advocates of a quick sale of the premises must be wishing now that they had kept quiet—and been a little less craven.



Markham Square Church.

means the only assets of Markham Square. The Chairman's Address on "Is there a Christian point of view?" was suggested by a number of very challenging things and sayings which have recently met me. Either we believe in Christianity or we don't. If we do, our views on all international, social, and moral questions will be determined by that fact—and *that fact alone*. Before making way for my successor, I wished to lay upon the consciences of my fellow-Congregationalists of "London, England," several things that were giving a good deal of healthy disturbance to my own.

G. STANLEY RUSSELL.

The Women's League.

On Monday, December 3rd, at 6 p.m., there will be given in the Library of the Memorial Hall the lecture on "The British Congregational

Home Missionary Work of the London Congregational Union

Pilgrimage to America" written by Mr. Arthur Porritt, editor of the *Christian World*, and illustrated by lantern slides specially selected by Mr. Walter Stoneman, F.R.P.S. Rev. A. G. Sleep has himself consented to take the chair, and Rev. S. J. Hooper of Wimbledon, himself a "Pilgrim," will deliver the lecture.

This event is taking place under the auspices of the Women's League Council, which, having disposed of the two big domestic events of the autumn—the Needlework Exhibition and the Half-yearly Meeting at Whitefield's, has organised this special effort in aid of the funds of the London Congregational Union to which all profits will go. (The price of admission is one shilling only.) The idea of arranging for the giving of the lecture originated with the League President, Mrs. Keesey, than whom the L.C.U. has no more staunch and practical supporter, as her year of office has proved. It is hoped that the lecture may be a great attraction, both to "Pilgrims," who will thus find an opportunity of living over again the memorable days of the trip, and to "Would-have-been Pilgrims" of whom there must be enough to fill the Library many times over. The Women's League looks forward to a full house on the evening of December 3rd.

The British-American Women's Crusade, which is supported by some twenty-eight organisations, of which the Women's League is one, is continuing its activities, its present objective being a vigorous educational campaign to follow up the signing of the Pact for the Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy, and to press for such action on the part of this country as shall afford proof of the good faith of our leaders in entering into the Pact.

The Crusade will supply speakers to meetings of Women's League Branches and other organisations in the Churches. For speakers, literature, and other information apply to the Secretary of the Women's League at the Memorial Hall, or to the British-American Women's Crusade, 55, Gower Street, W.C. 1.

Young People's Department.

There are some members of our Churches who seriously question whether the Church is wise, in

providing so much entertainment and social life for its Young People within the Church, considering that we should be better fulfilling our mission if we confined ourselves solely to the spiritual side of our nature. There are times, under present conditions, perhaps, when we all wonder if there is something in that contention. The real proof, of course, will always be the spiritual vigour of the Young People as a result of either one or the other policy. The Young People's Department in the last few years has organised a Tennis Tournament, and out of that sprung a desire for a wider service which led to the Conferences that have been held at the Memorial Hall during the past year, and from these Conferences comes a further step for a distinctly religious service, followed by a Communion Service held as part of the Autumnal Meetings at Whitefield's on November 5th.

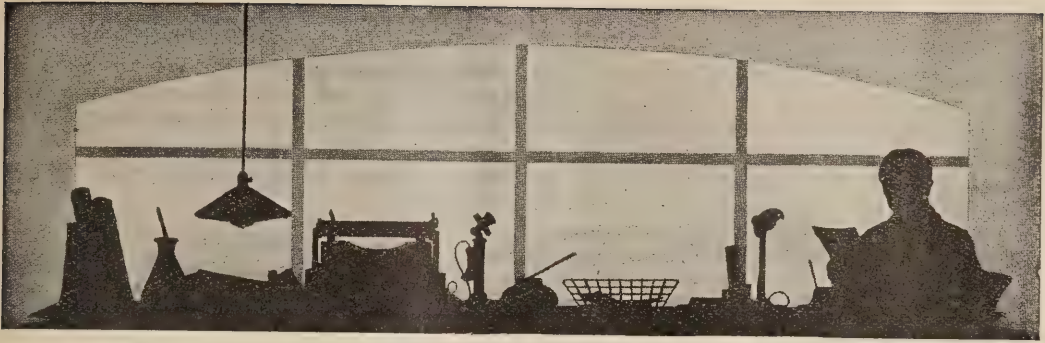
There also come a considerable number of reports from various Ministers and Churches, as to the new life and spirit that have been engendered in the Young People, as a result of these conferences. This new movement may have within it divine possibilities beyond our present understanding.

Office Bearers' Association.

The first meeting on Monday, October 15th, in the Large Hall, Memorial Hall, was attended by 250 men and some women. Over 300 Officers are already enrolled. Very soon that number will be more than doubled. Mr. H. W. Holmes was elected Acting-President until the first regular election under the Constitution. The meeting revealed the promise of the usefulness of the Association to the Churches and the Union.

Mr. A. E. Marsh of Westminster Congregational Church has consented to act as Secretary for the first year. The next meeting will be held in the Library on February 18th at 6.30.

*WILL THE UNION END THE YEAR WITH
THE DEFICIENCY CLEARED AND THE
INCOME INCREASED TO MEET ALL
NECESSITIES? IT DEPENDS ON YOU.
MANY PEOPLE IN VARIOUS PARTS OF
LONDON ARE ANXIOUSLY AWAITING
THE ANSWER.*



From the Centre

By the Rev. S. M. Berry, M.A., D.D.

Christmas.

"CHRISTMAS comes but once a year," says the old couplet, but with advancing years it seems to come oftener. I read somewhere the other day that Her Majesty the Queen begins to buy Christmas presents in January. I don't suppose for a moment the journalist who wrote the paragraph knew much about it, or that he was making more than a lucky shot at the facts, but it is certainly true that it seems hardly more than a month or two since we were worrying about what we could possibly buy for Aunt Maria, or teasing our brains about new contraptions for our cynical and case-hardened nephews. But the merry-go-round of the year has brought us within hailing distance of another Christmas, and when these lines appear we shall be saying the same old things all over again; such things, I mean, as "I cannot imagine Christmas is so near"; "I never felt less ready for it", and so on and so on. Well, it will come whether we realise it or not, and I suppose we shall prepare for it somehow; but let me be the first to wish you all a very happy Christmas, and to hope that the machinery of festivity which grows more complicated year by year will leave something of the care-free, festive spirit unspoiled. God rest you merry, ladies and gentlemen; may infectious happiness possess our far-spreading Congregational family.

Another Pilgrimage.

Did I hear someone grumble that we are making more pilgrimages than any mediæval Christian attempted? This year America, sacred to Congregationalists because of the men and women of the *Mayflower*; next year Canada, the scene of one of the greatest and most fruitful experiments in Church Unity. We do not know enough on this side of the water about the United Church of Canada, and it is certainly worth knowing about. We are making tentative approaches to the idea of uniting different denominations in our own country. Methodist union will, before long, become

an accomplished fact; now and again voices are heard suggesting that there should be friendly conversation with a view to union between Congregationalists and Presbyterians, or Congregationalists and Baptists. Some of the things which have the flavour of novelty upon them on this side of the ocean are already accomplished facts on the other side. Four years ago, three great denominations in Canada came together to form one United Church, Presbyterians, Methodists and ourselves. They realised that in a great new continent, with the overwhelming claims made upon the Church for pioneering work, the different denominations must get together and act together. That was four years ago, and already the union has more than justified itself. It has given a larger view to members of the different Churches, and there are signs already that a United Church consciousness has begun to grow up, and that loyalty and devotion have not suffered through the channels of service being widened. The United Church wants to keep in touch with its members in the three constituent denominations in the homeland. In gaining their own larger fellowship they do not wish to sacrifice anything of their touch with the old associations in Britain. In that spirit they have sent us an enthusiastic invitation to pay them a visit next summer, and to be present at Toronto on June 10th, when the fourth anniversary celebrations of the United Church are to take place. It is an invitation we could not refuse. It came from the heart of the United Church, and it has been responded to with equal feeling on our side. The Pilgrimage next year will differ from the Pilgrimage this year in one important particular. It will not consist exclusively of Congregationalists. We hope to take with us leaders and many of the rank and file of all the Churches which form part of the United Church of Canada. A great welcome is being prepared, and we shall have a few days longer on shore next year than we had this. No one who formed part of the "Celtic fringe" this year is likely to forget

From the Centre

the experience. I believe that those who enlist for the "Doric" are in for an equally great time. And my firm belief is that it is just as necessary and valuable to establish closer relationships with our own kith and kin in the Dominions as to offer the hand of friendship and co-operation to our cousins who form the other great English-speaking state. At Plymouth we looked back across three centuries to one of the great heroic ventures of faith: at Toronto we shall share in the spirit of another great venture of faith by which churches are coming into closer relationships with each other in order more effectively to do the work of the Kingdom.

A Choir Chapel.

It is one of the happy developments in our churches to-day that our Sunday worship is generally preceded by a few moments of quiet devotion in which the minister, the deacons, and the members of the choir meet together. Generally speaking, that little service of preparation is held in the choir vestry or in a classroom of the school. Park Chapel, Oldham, under the leadership of the Rev. George Shillito, has carried the development a stage further by turning one of their vestries into a chapel. I do not know what the vestry was like before the alteration was made, but from a long acquaintance with vestries I can imagine. The room now is beautiful, and suggestive of worship. The lower part of the walls is panelled, and at the end of the room where the reading-desk is placed there are three beautiful stained glass windows. The choir chapel will probably hold about forty or fifty people. The two services of preparation which were held there on the Sunday when I was privileged to be the preacher were wonderfully helpful in creating the spirit of worship. I have no idea what the alterations cost, but I am sure that a similar provision might be made in many of our churches. Such a side-chapel serves many useful purposes. We often need a small room for services during the week. The church itself is too large, and the schoolroom too bare, for the smaller the congregation the barer some of our church rooms look. We often feel the need for one of those little homes of devotion like one of the side-chapels in our cathedrals. In many cases it would be comparatively simple to use one of the larger classrooms for that purpose. It would not demand much structural alteration, and in many cases need not involve the church in any large financial outlay. But to have a little chapel for week-night devotional meetings instead of a schoolroom would make a great difference. Week-night services and prayer-meetings have not been helped by their surroundings. Bare boards, walls with a few execrable pictures, a tinkling piano or an asthmatic harmonium, and an all-pervading smell of gas, are not exactly helpful

accompaniments of worship. We can often rise above them, but there is no reason why these hindrances should be placed in our way. Why not see whether something cannot be done at once to provide a more fitting home for the devotions of the few?

An Editor's Suggestion to Laymen.

The following is an extract from the paper read by Mr. Arthur Birnage, the Editor of *Public Opinion*, at the Autumnal Meetings of the Congregational Union at Leeds. It is perhaps fitting that such a suggestion should be put into the Christmas number of the *Monthly*.

"As there are lay delegates here, may I get one thing off my mind? That is to ask them to be quite sure that their minister does not have to be dependent on reviews for his knowledge of the latest books. Only rarely can he possibly afford many books out of his stipend. You do not expect the clerk to buy his ledger or the workman to provide the raw material for his work, and books after all are the raw material of the thinker. Ten or twenty pounds a year spent by your church on books—whatever may be the size of the church debt—would be money well spent, and incidentally, if the parson uses the books to help him in the pulpit, as he surely will, even the debt might be cleared. I suggest to your laymen that you should make some effort to let your minister read the books which reviews tell him might be of use to him. If your church is not bold enough to adopt this suggestion, get a few other laymen to join you and put this scheme through off your own bat. It will prove one of those seeds which will multiply "a hundred fold"—only be big enough when you really get the plan in operation to let the minister choose his own books."

Still There is Bethlehem

ALL love and mystery in one little face,
All light and beauty in a single star
That rose among the shadows, pure and
far,
Above a humble place;
All Heaven in song upon a lonely hill,
Earth listening, fain and still.

The long years go; the old stars rise and set;
Dreams perish, and we falter in the night,
But still there's Bethlehem—could heart forget
That loveliness, that light?
Shadows there are, but who shall fail for them?
Still there is Bethlehem!

NANCY BYRD TURNER.

Daniel Gunn

By Dr. J. D. Jones, C.H., M.A.

I WANT in this article to do the work of Old Mortality, to clear away the moss that has gathered upon the grave of Daniel Gunn. The little town of Christchurch is famed for its Priory. But for Congregationalists it is famous for its Congregational Church, which dates back its origin to 1660, and which abides in vigour and strength to this day. Indeed there was probably a "gathered church" in Christchurch before 1660. In Cromwellian days the minister of the Priory, in addition to being the vicar of the parish, had a little "gathered" community to which he ministered. And not only has the Christchurch Church had a long history, it has had some notable ministers. It is of one of these, and perhaps the most notable of them, that I want to write.

Daniel Gunn became minister of Christchurch in 1817. He went there in 1816 as a year's supply. The experience of that year was such as to induce the Church to beg him to stay on as their permanent pastor, a request to which he gave an affirmative response. I have before me as I write the actual letter, signed by three deacons, in which the Church's invitation was conveyed to him.

Prior to this, he had been pastor of the Independent Church at Ilfracombe. Sir William Robertson Nicoll one day asked me what I knew about Daniel Gunn, and after I had disburdened myself of all I knew, he asked if I had ever read what was said about him in the autobiography of Mrs. Gilbert—the Ann Taylor of hymn writing fame and the sister of Isaac Taylor. I hadn't, but Sir William's hint sent me to the autobiography and I discovered there certain interesting things about his pre-Christchurch days.

Isaac and Jane and Ann Taylor, who had gone to Ilfracombe for health reasons, soon made the

acquaintance of Daniel Gunn, and Gunn's friendship greatly contributed to the enjoyment of their sojourn there. Evidently from Ann Taylor's description of him, he was a striking looking person. She speaks of him as "the noble Highlander" (he was from Caithness) and says that his "person, air and manners are those of a military man of rank." He spent most of his evenings with the Taylors while they remained at Ilfracombe, and all three wrote the highest encomiums upon "the charm of his manner and the power of his mind" But, adds Ann Taylor, "the graceful ease and candid frankness of his conversation remove any embarrassment in his company." He was evidently an excellent preacher, for they listened to him three times on Sunday, and their attendance at the lecture on Wednesday and the prayer meeting on Friday was unfailing.

There is a suggestion of romance in the relations between Ann Taylor and Daniel Gunn. While the Taylors were at Ilfracombe, Rev. Joseph Gilbert, a rector at Rotherham College, was so impressed with Ann's writings that although he had never seen her, he wrote asking if "he might solicit her heart and hand." He was allowed to come and visit them at Ilfracombe. It was quickly apparent he was both a gentleman and a scholar, but at first his suit did not prosper over well—to quote Mrs. Gilbert's autobiography (for Ann Taylor subsequently became Mrs. Gilbert):

"Perhaps at the moment Mr. Gunn was too much of an ideal hero to admit easily of a competitor."

Much more might be said of his relations with the Taylors, but enough has been said to show that, judged by the highest standards of culture, Daniel Gunn was a great gentleman and an able and even distinguished man,



The Rev. Daniel Gunn.

Daniel Gunn

But it is of his Christchurch ministry I wish to write. When I came to Bournemouth there were men still alive who had been trained under Daniel Gunn. And if a man's ministry is to be judged by the kind of men it moulds and fashions, then must Daniel Gunn's ministry be counted a great ministry, for the men I knew—men like Elias Lane and Henry Jenkins, to mention only two of them—were men of great piety, staunch Nonconformist convictions, and splendid public spirit. Nowadays people scarcely know what Congregationalism stands for. But Daniel Gunn's people knew. He was an uncompromising Dissenter. There are documents dating from his time which speak bluntly of the Church of England as "the enemy." Daniel Gunn believed that the Congregational position stood for New Testament truths, and he made his people think so too. Here is a sentence from a letter of Ann Taylor's which illustrates the effect of his teaching: "Father will be pleased to hear he is making us Dissenters to the backbone." He had the same effect upon his Christchurch people. He made convinced Congregationalists of them, men able to give a reason for the faith that was in them.

His contemporary fame rested mainly upon the Sunday School which he established. That school was so famous that even a statesman like Lord John Russell thought it worth while to spend a week-end at Christchurch to see it at work. I don't suppose a Sunday School could be carried on on the same lines in these days—the discipline wouldn't suit the children of to-day. The school met on Sundays at nine and again at one-thirty. Daniel Gunn himself was superintendent, and helping him were a band of zealous teachers and monitors. Every scholar wore a green bag containing Scriptures, hymn-book, and catechism. The monitors carried red bags. At ten-thirty the scholars adjourned to the chapel for Divine Service. At the close of the service, Daniel Gunn from the pulpit enquired of the monitors if there was any case of disorderly conduct, and if there was, he publicly rebuked it. At 5 p.m. another meeting was held, and at six o'clock they passed again into the Church for evening service. There was a good deal of the martinet about Daniel Gunn. But "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," and a visitor sent down by the Sunday School Union bears witness that on a wet day in July there were not less than 400 scholars present at nine o'clock, and still more in the afternoon. The whole aspect of the school filled him, he said, with indescribable satisfaction, and he was struck, he adds, by the cheerful countenances and the modest and respectful behaviour of the very children in the streets. But if Daniel Gunn was a martinet he had a very tender heart, and a great love for children. There are notices like these in his own handwriting: "Baptized in the year 1820 forty children . . . God bless all these children." That

little sentence crops up after every notice of baptism: "God bless them all." It is just a window into Daniel Gunn's heart.

Daniel Gunn was a "character." He had an individuality all his own. He had his peculiarities and his oddities, and the memory of these still lingers to this day. He had an immense idea of the prerogatives of the ministry. He would have held no terms with the modern notion so popular amongst us that there was no difference between a minister and a layman. He had a band of local preachers who conducted services in the village chapels around Christchurch. But he laid down the rule that they were not to preach sermons of their own; they were to read the sermons of properly accredited ministers. And in his prayers on Sunday, Mr. Gunn would ask God to bless the lay preachers who had gone out to preach printed discourses "without trenching on the ministerial office." The lay preachers did not always obey him. Rumours reached him that one of the best and saintliest of them—William Lane—was preaching sermons of his own. The old man felt he had to rebuke him, and this was how he did it. He stumped into the shop one day and said: "They tell me you are preaching your own sermons; I do not believe it; good morning"—and then stumped out again without giving William the chance of saying a word.

He was a great Church Extensionist. He was not afraid of sacrifices in the interest of the Kingdom of God. It is said that on the Sunday morning after the opening of the Church at Ripley, he found people at Christchurch whom he had dismissed to form the nucleus of the Church at Ripley. Most men would have been flattered by their attendance. They would take it as a proof of their affection and esteem. Daniel Gunn, almost sternly, charged them not to let him see them at Christchurch again.

Much more might be written about him. But enough has been said perhaps, to show that his is a name which we ought not to allow to fade out of remembrance. The spread of Congregationalism in Western Hants was largely due to him. For thirty-three years he laboured at Christchurch respected by all, and beloved of his own people. His last words for his people earnestly expressed were: "Tell them to hold fast the faith when my lips are closed in death."

BY two wings a man is lifted up from things earthly, namely, by simplicity and purity. Simplicity ought to be in the intention; purity in the affection. Simplicity doth tend towards God: purity doth apprehend and taste Him. If thou intend and seek nothing else but the will of God and the good of thy neighbour, thou shalt thoroughly enjoy inward liberty.

THOMAS À KEMPIS.

A ROUGH REARING

BY WOLFE STREET



CHAPTER XII

SIR JOHN and Fergus and Jake and May looked on, the former with delight written all over their faces, but Jake and May with sorrow. Recovery to Lady Repton meant loss to them; and suddenly Lady Repton, looking up, saw May's face, and understood in a moment.

"You must come back with me and nurse her," she said. "You haven't to lose her. Oh, you must have been good to her all this time. Why, look at her fine pinafore! Did you buy it?"

"No, mum! He did," pointing to Jake. "I ain't done nothing but look after her. Jake found the money, and he and the other men took their nights in turn to look after her."

Lady Repton listened amazed, but a judicious question or two brought out the whole story.

Ah, it was a long story! And, as May tore along with it breathlessly, relating how the woman who had left the baby had vanished; how Jake had decided to adopt Barbie; how they had all taken the child to their hearts; how Bob and Ned, and Ted, and Jake and Mother Miles had grown ever so fond of the child, Sir John and Lady Repton marvelled. Then when she came to her own illness in hospital, and how Jake, when Mother Miles fell ill, had fetched and carried the child to and from the crèche, and how, with the assistance of the Next-Door-Neighbour, they carried on till May came back, they looked at one another in amaze. This was a revelation of the generosity of the poorer classes, amongst whom Fergus worked, that simply staggered Sir John. But as the story unfolded the tragedy of Mother Miles's death in hospital, and the death of Ted Hall, Sir John chipped in with:

"And do you mean to tell me that you, a young

slip of a girl, have been living alone in the house with these men ever since, taking care of Baby?"

"Yes, sir," May answered. "Yer see Jake was like a brother to me, an' 'e took care o' me. He drewed out all 'is savings to pay fer muvver's fun'el, but 'e 'urt 'is back, and I don't think we could 'a paid the landlord no longer; fer, yer see, Jake couldn't do nuffin' but light work, an' it was so different from when 'e was earning good money at the market."


"Thank God! We've come just in time," said Lady Repton. "You might have had to go into service, and when your home was broken up, Barbie might have gone to the workhouse; and we should never have found her. Well, we will take her back now. I think you had better pack up whatever clothes you have, my child, and bring Barbie back with us."

"But, ma'am, I can't run away and leave old Jake and the other men to shift fer theirselves. 'Sides, much as I love Barbie, I ain't a-goin' to be parted from Jake. 'E's stood by me and Barbie, an' it stands to reason I must stand by him."

Jake looked across at her gratefully; and, meanwhile, Lady Repton thought rapidly.

"Oh, I think that Jake had better come too," said Lady Repton. "We can't afford to lose sight of a man like Jake; they are too scarce. Jake," shaking hands with him impulsively, "you must be a good chap to have done all you have for a strange little baby. You won't want to part with Barbie, and it certainly is not fair to separate you from May. As for May, she must come back with me at once. Why, I shouldn't know what to do without her, as I am sure Barbie would not. So, Fergus, will you go and make all arrangements with the landlord; John, I think you had better buy this house and give it to that dear thing they call the Next-Door-Neighbour. And, if they will come, you must get Bob and Ned and Jake down to Little Repton. There will be sure to be plenty of work on the estate for them; and, as for Jake, he must take a long rest under the doctor's care till he gets his back quite right. There"—turning to May—"all the difficulties are quite cleared away, so put on your things and come along."

"Come into the next room with me, Jake," said Sir John. "You can take May with you, of course,



A Rough Rearing

Hilda, if she'll come. But these other matters require a little thinking over. I'll talk them over with Jake and Fergus."

The result of that talk was effectual. Sir John gave Jake instructions to carry on for a few days on the spot, doing no work, so that he might rest. He gave him a ten-pound note to go on with, and suggested to Fergus that he should see Bob and Ned, and induce them to come and live at Little Repton. Meanwhile, as they would need someone to look after them, he sent for the Next-Door-Neighbour, and after thanking her for all she had done for Barbie, told her that she would hear from him further in a few days. Until then she was to look after the men, and, as an earnest of how grateful he felt, he placed in her hand a five-pound note.

And that night Barbie slept in the home of her ancestors, with May, who was awestruck at the beauty and cleanliness of the room given to her for Barbie and herself to sleep in.

But before she laid her own excited head on the pillow, she had another prayer-talk with Jesus.

"Jesus," she said, in her simple language, "I'm much obliged fer the way as Yer've managed things. I thought I was goin' ter be thrown over. But it's the ship's gone this time, and Yer've saved us all. This is a lovely place, a'most too good fer me, but I'll try an' do me best if You'll help me. Please, God, bless Barbie's mother, and make up ter her fer all the time she's lost, 'cos of my bein' so wicked as to take that fastener." Then she fell asleep.

Lady Repton's gratitude to the poor people who had befriended her baby knew no bounds. Over Ted's grave, and over the grave of May's mother, she placed memorial stones, an act that won its way straight to the hearts of the men. "The Next-Door-Neighbour" had her children looked after, and she herself was informed that Sir John had bought the house Jake had lived in, and she could live in it, furniture and all, rent free in future.

Jake went down to Little Repton, and for some weeks he was lodged at Sir John's expense in a gamekeeper's cottage, until, what with the quiet regularity of his life, and freedom from worry, and good food and good air, he became the old Jake Bell, strong as a dray horse.

Jake, however, had very great difficulty in winning Bob and Ned to come with him to the country; but after a lot of pleading based chiefly on the argument that they had taken up with Barbie, and they ought to see the thing through, they gave in at last, and left the land of the "White Horse" for ever.

Sir John found Jake work as an under-keeper in his covers, and the other two became estate labourers, and presently, removed as they were from their old surroundings, they gradually settled down into decent men, both of them marrying respectable country women.

But Jake, day after day, kept stolidly on at his work,

and when it was done, he would go home to his lodgings, now in the house of the gardener, spruce himself up, and go at once to the big house to see May, and have his nightly game with Barbie, for Lady Repton gave him express permission.

Jake got on splendidly with Barbie still; she loved and clung to him in her old fashion, but somehow he never felt the same in the presence of May as he had in the old home. There he had ordered her about, and she looked up to him with rightful awe as the man who paid the bills. But here, face to face with the smartly-attired nurse, who had learned to speak in quiet, clear tones, and who had dropped her innocent massacre of the King's English, he felt abashed. Night after night he went away wondering why he had not kissed her good-night, as in the old days, and leaving her wondering too.

"She's grown out of me," he murmured to himself, miserably. "It's a pity parson came along when he did and found out who Barbie was. If he hadn't, and things'd gone on as they was a-going, we'd a' been spliced afore Lady Repton come on the scene. She'll never look at me now."

It was not long, however, before a grand wedding at Little Repton Church between Fergus and Rita brought the subject uppermost in Jake's mind.

Fergus had taken a house in the East End, and was going to live there with Rita for a time; and the whole of the village went down to the station to see the bridal pair off for their honeymoon. As they all straggled towards the Hall again, May and Jake naturally fell into each other's company, but on the way Jake invited May to take a little walk with him before they went in.

"It'll be a lovely night," he said.

"I'd like to," she answered, softly. "We never do see much of one another now. I mean in the old way. But I must get in first and ask the nursemaid to come and look after Barbie for a bit. Then I'll mention it to Lady Repton, before I come out."

Presently she joined him, and they went towards the labourers' cottages.

"Bob and Ned have settled down well," he said. "I was in there last night at Ned's. He seems very comfortable. His missus is a nice clean woman, and so is Bob's."

"Yes, I like them both," she said. "Just think what a blessing Barbie's been to us all."

"Ah!" said Jake. "You always said God had a finger in our pie, and I believe it now. Look there!" And he pointed to the broad sweep of view that stretched away before them. "That's something different from the East End! But d'ye know, May, I miss the old house, and I miss your reading o' nights, and I miss you."

A crimson colour spread over May's face, but she said nothing.—"May!"—Dead silence.

"May!" he whispered. "Can't you come back?"

A Rough Rearing

I want yer bad! Sir John'd find us a cottage ter live in."

"But what's Barbie ter do?" she queried. "I'd like ter come"—and her hand stolt out to Jake. "You've always been good to me. Look here, Jake, I'll speak to Lady Repton about it."

Shyly enough, May broke the news of Jake's request to Lady Repton.

"And do you want to go to him, May?"

There was silence for a little, and then May, with one of her old mischievous smiles, said:

"I feel I ought to want to go to him. You've no idea, my lady, how good he was to us. And he does seem that lonely."

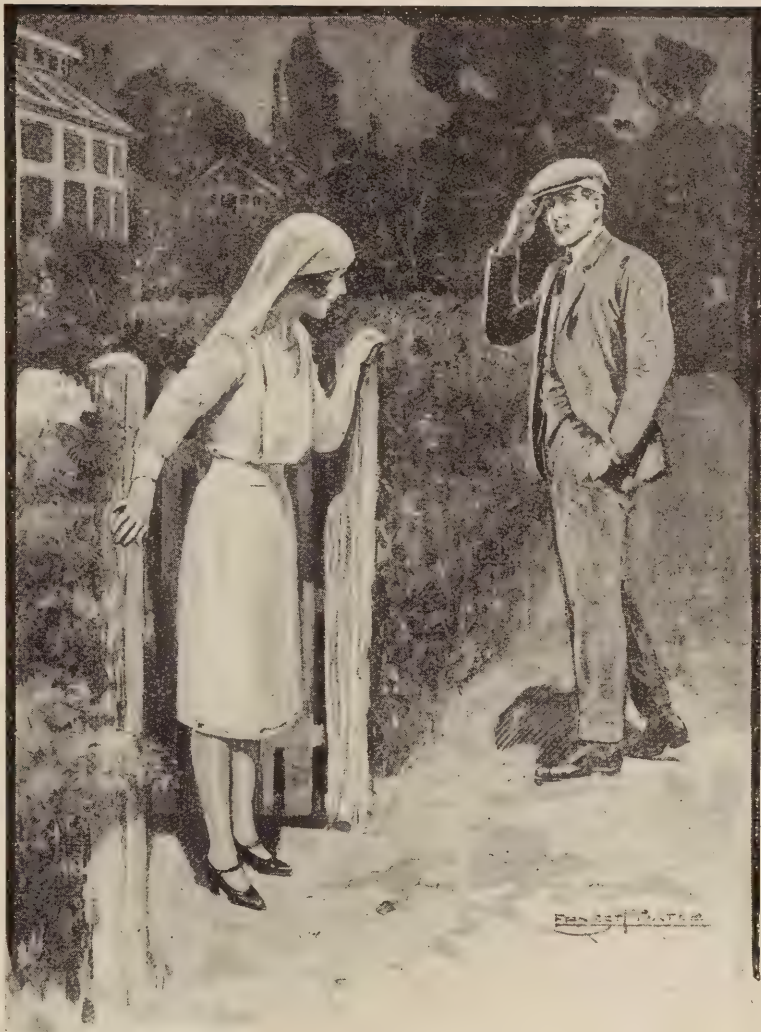
Lady Repton smiled, and that night she spoke to Sir John about it.

"Now, John! I don't want to lose my nurse, so I think the best arrangement that can be made will be to give them a couple of rooms in our house, and let Jake go backwards and forwards to his work. I'll furnish the rooms for them, and you can give Jake some help later on, if it is ever necessary for them to start housekeeping for themselves."

And so it was arranged! Only the night before their marriage by Fergus Stamford, who had come down with Rita for the purpose, bringing the "Next-Door-Neighbour" with them as a special guest, May let Jake depart from Barbie's nursery for the last time, and this time he kissed her with a vengeance.

Rosy-faced and almost breathless, she jerked out: "I wonder you are not afraid to marry a Jonah like me!"

He laughed. Then suddenly his face grew grave



Night after night he went away wondering why he had not kissed her good-night.

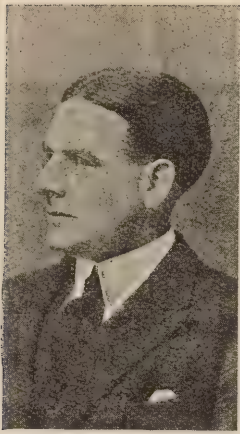
and he said, "Ah, gal, you always did say that Jonah's God had a finger in our pie, and the more I think it out, the truer like it seems. Anyhow, for good or for bad I'm taking you on as a passenger on my ship to-morrow, and, whether it's fine or stormy, I'll never throw you overboard. Never! I love you, gal!", fiercely. "Do you hear, I love you!"

And he has been proving it ever since.

THE END.

MAKE yourselves nests of pleasant thoughts, bright fancies, satisfied memories, noble histories, faithful sayings, treasure houses of precious

and restful thoughts, which care cannot disturb nor pain make gloomy—houses built without hands, for souls to live in.—JOHN RUSKIN.



My Ideal Evening

By the Rev. John Bevan, M.A.

TO begin with, the telephone *must* be out of order. My diary must shew that I am free from meetings either at church or elsewhere. I must have had a rare spasm of letter writing, so that no unanswered epistles ruffle my mind's peace. The replies to the *Christian World* must have just

been dropped into the pillar box and it must be far too early in the week for me to be worried over next Sunday's sermons.

The seven o'clock supper is over, so I have till half past ten for the most adorable occupation in the world—the making of oak panelling. The secret may as well come out: I am panelling our dining-room. I was driven to this partly through an inordinate affection for oak *qua* oak (for me there is no other wood), and partly because Mag and I cannot abide wall-papers: I always *count* the recurring bits of the pattern (bathroom wall-papers are a nightmare, as you may imagine). Plain ones are *just* possible, but only for lack of oak panelling.

The panelling is made in units, each of which is rawl-plugged to the wall when finished. You will note that it can be taken down in a few minutes, not being a permanent fixture. If I were a *real*

Christian I should let it belong to the Manse for good. But I simply haven't got it in me to part with it. Very few of us are a hundred per cent Christians.

So with the heart of an eager lad, on my ideal evening I climb to the attic wherein is a carpenter's bench. I am soon at work on a unit, which measures six feet by three, contains eighteen panels and is made of inch oak. The posts and rails are two inches wide and the panels ten inches square. As I am not proficient enough for a mortice and tenon joint, I have to be satisfied with halved joints. Each joint is pegged with four pegs: this gives the work a very swish look. The panels are held in by beading, not on the solid, but planted on, and are fastened in at the back by a quarter inch hazel slip.

When fitted together, it is glass-papered down and then given two coats of "Stainax" (old oak colour) which gives a flat wax surface. Each unit, in material, costs between twenty-five and thirty shillings (it would cost, ready made, at least eight times that).

The climax arrives: the unit of panelling has just been put in position on the wall. The whole family, including the Airedale, must rush in to behold and stand by to admire my handiwork. The telephone!

"Is that you, Mr. Bevan? I've been trying to get you all the evening, but your telephone must have been out of order. Have you forgotten the Deacons' Meeting? Hope you are not ill. We've been here waiting for the last hour. . . ."

Take my advice: don't keep *two* diaries.

Church Year Meditations—Christmas Day

By the Rev. A. D. Martin

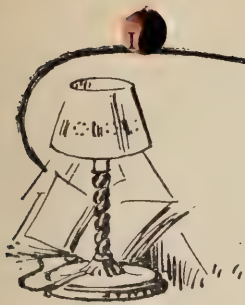
FROM December 17th to 24th Pagan Rome used to be gay with feasting. Schools were closed. Work was generally laid aside. Social distinctions lapsed, masters and slaves dining at the same board. For December was consecrated to Saturn, a son of Jupiter who, coming to earth, had taught men agriculture and kindly ways.

Towards the beginning of the Christian era also, the cult of Mithra spread Romewards from the East. Mithra was a solar deity. His name means "associate" or "friend," for is not the sun the fount of all the earth's beneficence? And from December 21st to 24th, when the undefeated sun again was beginning to extend his rule, special Mithraic rites were celebrated.

And so it was that when the leaders of the Christmas Church were balancing rival theories as to the date of their Lord's birth, December 25th was chosen, not wholly on historic grounds, but largely because it was adapted better than any other day for emphasising the significance of Christ. Jesus was the

true Sun of God, the bestower of *gifts upon men, even upon the rebellious also*. He was the friend of the Home and of Children. In Him there was neither bond nor free. More than Mithra He was the true *Sol invictus*, the triumphing Light of the World. Thus with a grand gesture of comprehension, the Church grafted a Christian quality upon old Pagan feasts.

There have been some accommodations with Paganism which have done the Church no good. But the blending of Saturnalian feasting and Sun-worship with the holy Advent Season none of us can regret. It reminds me of the real good in those Pagan cults which preceded the coming of our Lord. All that is best in our human loves and faiths is summed up in Him. I can only worship Jesus thus. He is never separated from the Word in Whom all mankind have their origin. A myriad lights shine in that Pagan twilight which preceded the Day-spring, and if they are now mostly lost to view it is because they are absorbed, rather than extinguished in the cult of Christ.



At Odd Angles

By W. K. Burford



NOW that Nonconformity has taken to Gothic architecture ("as it were," we may say of some of it), the pulpit has moved to a corner, commanding the congregation slant wise. This seems to me not merely an architectural or acoustic matter, but to be suggestive of the psychology of the present-day pulpit. The old-time pulpit, often a "three decker," facing dead down the centre aisle, was expressive of a very different mentality than that of to-day, on the part of both preacher and hearer. The "odd-angle" of the modern pulpit seems to symbolise freedom from the stale balance of clerical domination and lay submission. Geologists, in regard to the tilt of strata, speak of the "angle of stability." The corner-wise pulpit is at an angle of escape. The days of *ex cathedra* preaching have entirely gone. The scope of the pulpit, now, is, happily, not authority but influence. Preaching is no longer the working of a piston-rod in an oiled socket. Congregations to-day are not regimented and docile. They are not to be drilled into the goose-step. They do not start listening with the old-fashioned grace asking that, for what they are about to receive, they may be made truly thankful. The old nets don't catch the birds. Which, I admit, is an abominable metaphor to use in such a matter, although even an Apostle said, with pathetic playfulness: "Being crafty, I caught you with guile." So perhaps the idea of strategy in the pulpit may be allowed. Only let it be of a noble kind. In addressing the students at one of our Congregational colleges I ventured to give them this advice, as from an old hand: "Don't trust to pulpit tricks. The pew has found them out, long ago." I wasn't speaking of the cruder sins of conscious, rehearsed affectations, cheap even on the stage. These sickening hypocrisies of pulpit play-acting are, one hopes, as rare as they are revolting. They are abnormalities not at all typical, or even frequent. My warning was against artificialities more naïve and innocent; yet to be greatly discouraged.

There is, for instance—one of the pulpit's worst sins—the professional voice. Why can't all preachers talk in a natural way so that congregations can hear them "in their own tongue, wherein they were born"! I once had the interesting experience of broadcasting from 2 LO for a charity. (I was only the humble emergency-deputy for a suddenly

indisposed duchess.) Being anxious to do the strange and important job as well as possible, I got the courteous announcer to coach me a little. On asking him if I should speak as though I was in the pulpit, he exclaimed with alarm and horror: "Good heavens, no!" I hastened to explain that I wasn't meaning what he thought I did, and was simply enquiring as to pitch and loudness. But his alarm set me thinking. What have we preachers done to give people that attitude? Why does the epithet "sermonise" fail to convey the idea of something natural, interesting, exhilarating? Why does it suggest the reverse? I think it is very largely a matter of the conventional pulpit voice—a thing quite *sui generis*. John Morley once said of Macaulay that he wrote in a style in which it was impossible to tell the truth. I suppose that referred to Macaulay's highly-coloured rhetoric and to his vehement prejudices. Personally I like a writer with a bit of temperature and colour, and with blood in his veins rather than sawdust. Also I don't mind a bit of prejudice. One can't be fair without it. No unbiassed mind can give real interest to history; and honest, earnest prejudices carry their own antidotes. Anyhow, I would sooner have warm-blooded vividness than cold-blooded accuracy. Truth and accuracy are very different things. Accuracy can be, sometimes, the most misleading thing in the world. Mere correctness is often only a kind of gilt-edged falsehood.

But *revenous à nos moutons*. I was speaking of the artificial pulpit voice. There is, to adapt Morley's stricture on Macaulay, a preaching tone in which it is impossible to tell the truth. An unreal atmosphere is created which asphyxiates truth. A bishop said, shrewdly, the other day: "You can't confess your sins in G." The recognition of that principle would abolish all the suffocating conventionalism of our worship. Let preachers dare to be natural. Even pulpit mediocrity would be tolerable then. Let the humblest bird "warble his native wood notes wild" and the world will listen. The corner pulpit suggests his own angle for every man, and if it is a little odd, well, none the worse for that. To us ordinary preachers, with none of the coruscations of genius, there is an inspiration in Browning's counsel: "Best be yourself, imperial, plain and true."

Uncovering Ancient Pompeii

By H. J. Shepstone, F.R.G.S.



General View of the ruined City of Pompeii.

PICK and shovel are writing to-day a story over eighteen centuries old, the story of one of the greatest tragedies in the world. Little by little, street by street, and palace by palace, the ancient city of Pompeii is adding chapter to chapter of her autobiography of anguish. Skilled excavators are releasing her from the burden under which, with her dead, she lies buried, beneath the vomit of a burning mountain, which in a twinkling converted her from the gayest city in the world into one vast catacomb.

The origin of the work is not new. The present generation has grown up in the knowledge of the digging down to Pompeii, but of recent months discoveries have been made both at Pompeii and its sister city of Herculaneum which have eclipsed all previous finds, and reveal dread Vesuvius as the master embalmer of the world.

Pompeii, which became a sort of Rome-on-Sea, was founded when Zedekiah ruled in Jerusalem and Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon, six

centuries before the Christian era. When the city sank to ruin beneath her pall of incandescent lava she was a city of 300,000 souls. Built at the southern base of Mount Vesuvius, fourteen miles south-east of Naples, Pompeii became a vast treasure-house of art and luxury, the seaside resort of the patricians of Rome.

But with all her glories and riches Pompeii in

A.D. 79 shared the fate of the Cities of the Plain. Vesuvius, at whose foot she had been challengingly placed, was seen suddenly to throw up a mighty sable cloud, followed by a storm of burning dust and boiling lava. The eruption continued for three days and three nights, burying every living thing, every building and monument. For fifteen hundred years



A typical street in Pompeii.

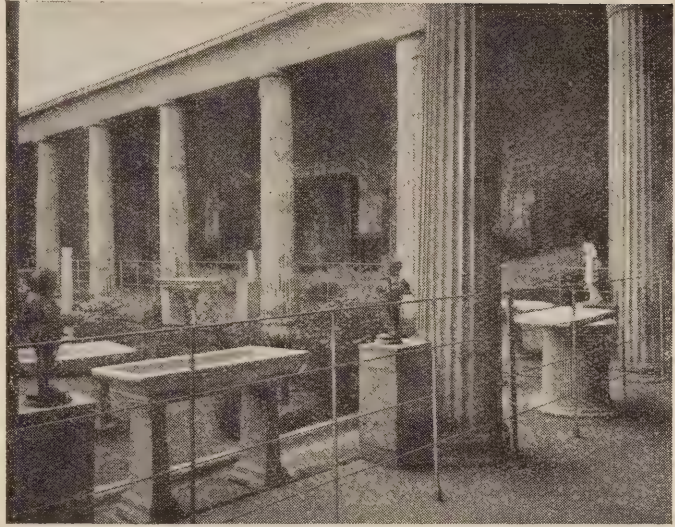
Pompeii was blotted, not only out of existence, but out of knowledge. Peasants ploughed over the thin soil that collected upon the mountain of ash and lava that concealed the forgotten city. Then, casually and at intervals, vandal hands penetrated

Uncovering Ancient Pompeii

into the buried city, though it was not until recent years that the work of uncovering the site was organised. We are now reaping the fruit of that systematised search, and the harvest is rich though poignant.

Many of the noble thoroughfares, with their amphitheatres, their forums, their palaces and cafés, are exposed. We see the art treasures that delighted them; the manner in which they conducted their households and business. In the great "Street of Abundance" we can inspect a Roman saloon upon whose walls are notices of the elections that stirred the public mind of Pompeii in the year 79. One reads: "Vote for Fuscus as your alderman." On the white-tiled counter of the saloon stands the barman's till, a small square box of bone, containing the very coins he had taken—coins of gold and silver, and counters of ivory, placed there in payment by the last customers ever known in that wineshop of the living Pompeii. But, more marvellous still, the very wine of which the customers of the house partook is in the jars of bronze, glass, and terra-cotta in use on the fatal night. A cauldron, hermetically sealed, with the embers of the last fire beneath it, contains the water that was boiling for hot drinks and other purposes when disaster came 1,849 years ago.

Relics more tragic and terrible have come to light on the threshold of a not distant palace. This was the palace of Obellius Firmus, a noble building.



Courtyard in the House of Vetti.

At the gates lie six figures, imperishably preserved in a matrix of lava. There lies Obellius himself and his wife, just where they were struck down by the fiery visitation. The mother and father have crept close together at the approach of death, to meet their doom hand in hand. Beside them lie their two children, clasped in each other's arms. Behind these four are those of two other persons believed to be confidential slaves. There they all lie, where they have lain for eighteen centuries, perfectly embalmed by the art of the volcano; and there they will lie, for they are not to be moved, but to remain, a mute, frightful memorial of the death that came on molten wings.

In a like manner whole streets have been uncovered and in some of them we can still see the ruts made by the chariot wheels. Particularly fascinating are the many palatial residences which have been partially restored, such as the House of Pansa, the House of the Vetti, House of the Cupids, and many others. They opened on to spacious courtyards where fountains played. The walls of many of these dwellings are covered with fine paintings, varying from simple draped and decorated figures placed in the centre of large panels to highly-elaborate subject pieces. In many cases, too, the colours are as bright and fresh as when the buildings were overwhelmed in the year 79.

In another article we may describe the discoveries at Herculaneum.



Vesuvius as seen from the Forum in Pompeii.



MY DEAR HAROLD,

Thank you for your letter delivered at my barn this morning. I am glad to hear that you have decided to become a Church member, and that you are to be received at the Communion Service on New Year's Sunday. No better way of beginning a new year can be found than that of pledging one's self to be loyal to Christ and to His Church.

You have, I know, given long and careful thought to the step you are now taking. I am glad of that. I have seen in my time far too many young people join the Church to please their parents or their ministers, because an earnest Sunday School teacher pressed them to do so, or because some of their friends were joining. In many cases they have given no real thought to the matter nor had they any strong convictions about it, and so they have become a weakness rather than a strength to the Church. The central principle of Congregationalism is that the Church is composed of those—and only those—who love the Lord Jesus Christ and desire to serve Him, and a Church with twenty such members is far stronger than a Church—if it can be so-called—of 200 lukewarm folks who do not know why they joined the Church and whose religious convictions, having no roots, can bear no fruit.

I have heard you say many times that, having read all you could about the matter, you became a Congregationalist by conviction. To you a Church consists of those who love Jesus Christ, gathered together for worship, fellowship, and service. I hope you will always hold this belief as firmly as you do now, for it will keep you ever loyal and true, and ensure that you do not slack in your devotion to your ideal with the passing years. That belief was the clear spring of water that gave life and refreshing to the first fathers of our Churches, and it can give life and refreshing still, and make you glow with the healthy strength and vigour of the truly Christian soul. Why am I so confident of that? Just because if you always feel that Christ is in the midst of His people when they gather together, nothing in your Church life can become ordinary and commonplace, deadly and dull.

Take worship. From every side I hear rising to the skies laments that people do not attend church as they once did. Why is it? It is because they have looked on worship as the hearing of sermons or of beautiful music, or the offering of prayers or sacrifices to a distant God: it is because they have come to church in a conventional way, because their fathers did it, or because it was the custom in their group. If you keep always before you the idea that Christ is with His people when they gather together, what a difference it makes. If the preacher remembers that Christ is a member of his congregation, and that he is speaking to Him as well as for Him, his sermon throbs with life, and his prayers are cleansed from all unreality: if the choir remember that Christ is singing with them they cannot but forget themselves and sing to the glory of God: if you and your fellow-members remember that He is there with you, every service becomes a sacrament and a blessing.

So with the fellowship of the Church. If Christ is there, all the routine of a Church's life is shot through with His glory: if He is in the midst, every detail of the business is linked with the purpose for which He lived and died—the winning of all men for His Father's Kingdom.

In the service of the Church no meanness or pettiness can find a place. Once you remember that He is working by your side, all you do seems so poor and meagre compared with His sacrifice that no grievance can find a resting-place in your mind, no discontent lodge in your heart.

You can read all about the duties and privileges of Church membership in little books like Dr. J. D. Jones's *The Ideal Church Member* or the Rev. Francis Wrigley's *Church Membership*: if you want bigger books I daresay the editors of this magazine will advise you if you write to them. But the duties will be all right if you cling to the idea you now have: Jesus is with you when you gather together in His Name: to belong to the Church which has Him in the midst is a grand and glorious thing.

I'm more glad than I can say that you are taking this step, my boy. God bless you.

I am,

Yours very sincerely,

"THE OWL."



Why He Came

By the Rev. Hugh Jenkins, M.A.

JESUS constantly spoke of Himself as having *come*. At this holy season, we commemorate something more than a wondrous birth. We keep the festival of the *coming* of the Son of God into human nature and mortal conditions.

Why did He come? He tells us that He came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. He came, not that we might serve Him, but that He might serve us! It startles us—the world's standards of greatness being what they are—to hear the Lord and Master of us all declare that He is servant of all, and that it was with this in view that He assumed our nature.

Since He said it Himself, why do we not take Him at His word? Our personal influence is impoverished and attenuated, and the work of our Churches is strained and feverish, because we habitually attach more importance to what we do for Him than to what He can do for us. Most of us are but poor Christians, because we have turned the Good News the wrong way round. We assume that the Son of Man came, not to minister, but to be ministered unto! "I believe," said John Ruskin, "that the root of almost every heresy and schism from which the Christian Church has ever suffered may be found in the effort of men to *earn* rather than *receive* their salvation, and that the reason why preaching is so commonly ineffectual is that it calls upon men to work for God rather than to behold God working for them."

He was still thinking of Himself as our Servant when He added that He came to give His life a ransom for many. A ransom means the purchase price of a slave. When Jesus used the word, He meant that He found us slaves of fear, doubt, despair, superstition, ignorance, sorrow, and sin, and that it cost Him His life to set us free. Our Lord's meaning is plain even to the wayfaring man, if he leaves warring theologians alone and takes guidance of his dear human relationships. Think of those who have loved us better than they loved themselves—of the parents, the wife or sister who laid down their lives a moment at a time in patient ministry and sacrifice until their hands were folded in death. In spirit their sacrifice was the same as that of Jesus. They did in their measure what He did and does for us. In His incarnation, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection, He gave His life a moment at a time to liberate us from bondage. He does not say that He gave His death. He did

more even than that. He gave His life. "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

During a period of impaired health, Charlotte Elliott was depressed by the thought that in a world where so much service is called for, she could do nothing for her Saviour. It was the week of the Church Bazaar, and her depression became unendurable. All her women friends were busy as bees, and she was condemned to idleness! Just then this aspect of the Gospel presented itself to her mind. She had read these words a hundred times, but always the wrong way round! Could it be possible that her Lord's supreme desire was to serve her, and that her service of Him was a secondary thing? With this new discovery of Christ in her mind, she turned to Him in her need. And after He had served her, and had restored to her the peace that He alone can give, she did Him and us an act of service which has been told in all the world for a memorial of her. She wrote:—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee—
O Lamb of God, I come."

Her acceptance of the service Christ offered became her greatest act of service to Him and to the world. When we begin by letting Him serve us—and this is what He asks of us—we shall not need to lash ourselves or others to serve Him. The Church would at once and without doubt assume the moral and spiritual leadership of the world, if the churches became known as places where men and women meet to be served by Jesus Christ.

When Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," He must have been conscious of having in Himself all that every man and woman needs. He can pardon us, restore our self-respect, and give us a new start in life. There is nothing with which He can do so much as a broken and a contrite heart. He can break the power of every evil habit. He can give us victory over every fear, doubt, and despair. Best of all, He can so serve us that His spirit of service becomes ours. When daily served by Him, our life finds its normal expression in obedience to His word: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

Police Service as a Vocation for Women

By Commandant Mary S. Allen

THERE is still a large section of the public by whom the question of the employment of women as police is entirely misunderstood. Some are afraid that policewomen wish eventually to undertake all the duties at present so adequately carried out by men. Others consider that police work is unsuitable for women, while others again do not realise that the work of a modern police force is closely connected with the lives and welfare of women and children as well as men. The whole



Commandant Mary S. Allen.

trend of modern police methods is to improve and make more adequate the preventive side of the work. In the last twenty years immense strides have been made in the more humane treatment of offenders, and it is in no spirit of harsh criticism of older methods that new ones are thought necessary: it is simply that human understanding grows, and with it is felt the need for an advance. And to-day there is no doubt that women are needed in the police service. Some still consider this with a certain amount of prejudice, others with real scorn, but fortunately, as in all other reforms, there are those with vision who see in it not only a vital need, but the beginning of a more scientific and normal way of dealing with many of our present-day problems.

Mr. Cecil Chapman, so well known for his splendid work as a Metropolitan magistrate, says in an article on women police in the "Policewoman's Review": "The average man thinks of police work as confined to the detection of crime and the bringing of criminals to justice, with the additional work of regulating traffic and other kindred services. All this seems to require physical strength and courage above everything else, and for that reason it is unsuitable work for women. This is a profound mistake. Nobody wants to turn women into men, but everybody knows by this time that nothing has hindered the progress of the world so much as man's reluctance to admit women to an equal share of its management. In the work of policing both sexes situations arise continually in which the examinations of women are not only desirable, but necessary. Nothing ruins a man more quickly than forgetfulness of what is due

to the feeling of modesty, and nothing can be worse for a woman than the assumption that because she has come within the grasp of the law she has lost her natural feeling of modesty. All this implies that wherever women are arrested and detained, some woman or women are required to take care of and protect them till they are brought to trial."

This opinion is now becoming obvious to all who will look facts in the face, and who are not afraid through prejudice to acknowledge that it is a fair

and necessary reform. Many Chief Constables now pay warm tributes to the work of women police in their areas, and the time is coming when every area will have its well-trained policewomen. To many the idea of women dealing with such problems as prostitution, drunkenness, and indecency of all kinds is an almost outrageous one. To those who look deeper, however, it will be seen that these problems are not new to women, nor are they liable to shock those who choose police work as a profession. The average man or woman may receive a severe shock when reading many of the cases with which our magistrates have to deal in these days, but neither women magistrates nor women police need be ashamed if a shock is felt, unless this is followed by a complete inability to act in the interest of the right. Such inability has never been proved against policewomen, and this objection, therefore, becomes one of sheer misunderstanding and prejudice. The police service needs women of good health, plenty of common-sense and high idealism. It is not an easy profession, and demands a very lofty conception of duty, and a careful training, but the opportunities it gives to help the weak and erring are innumerable.

No one who has studied the questions of Traffic in Women and Children, Prostitution, and Child Assault, can fail to appreciate the vital importance which the right handling of these problems will ultimately have in every country. More depends on reasoned consideration being given to adequate preventive methods than any other factor, and I have no hesitation in saying that women as police have a fine duty to perform and a great service to render to their fellows.

Christmas Among the Outcastes

By the Rev. Edward Shillito, M.A.

IT was only a few days before Christmas and busy preparations were being made in the L.M.S. Hospital at Erode, in South India. The Indian nurses meant to share their Christmas with others by giving a treat to the school-children in an outcaste village. They gave three annas each, and managed to get together baskets of plantains, and Indian biscuits and sweetmeats. The baskets were heavy, but there was the car to take some of them and the baskets part of the way; down the sandy pathway with cactus bushes on either side the car made its way, till the road became so narrow, and all of the party, the women missionaries and the nurses, had to walk.

They asked several men and boys to help them with the baskets, but they refused when they saw that the party were going to an outcaste village; for the outcaste is still for most Indians an untouchable. However, one youth agreed to carry a basket, and in time they reached the village. We can picture those nurses with their clean many-coloured saris, and their tidy jackets, coming into the village, and wandering about at first round the dirty little spaces between the mud huts, where were goats and pigs and dogs and buffaloes. They came as a matter of fact into the wrong end of the village, and did not reach the school at once. The school was the bright place in the village, and there the village mistress and the scholars were awaiting their visitors.

First the nurses sang a Christmas lyric. At this the men and women of the village began to gather round them; and some of the caste people stood outside the circle looking on; after the song,

there was prayer and an address from the Indian matron of the Hospital. She told them the story of Christmas, and what the coming of Jesus had meant for all of them. It was the first time that many of them had heard the story of Bethlehem. As she talked, she put questions to them:

"Who is your village god?"

"Mariamma," they shouted. (This is the small-pox goddess.)

"Does she really help you?"

An old man squatting in the front cried out "No."

Then the matron told of the power of Jesus to save and to help. The children now sang their lyrics but seeing that all of them meant to make the most of the occasion, irrespective of music, the result was a screeching yell.

Then the plantains and biscuits and sweetmeats were handed round, and the Sunday School cards. All of them went mad with delight when they saw the pictures, even the toothless old men stretched out their hands for them. Sometimes those who got them hid them away, and came up for others.

By this time the poor folk were quite at home, and came near to stare at the strangers. But the outcastes were dirty and

untidy; till the news of Christ came, they had had no change of clothing, being outsiders and untouchables.

It was a very happy company of nurses who tramped back to Erode that December night.

Those very nurses were most of them outcastes themselves. They had come from such a village as that to which they had carried Christmas. The light of hope has begun to dawn upon the outcastes.



In an Outcaste Village, Erode.



Here comes holly that is so gent,
To please all men is his intent.

Old Christmas Carol.

OLD carols sing the praises of holly, emblem of Christmas jollity: and on a drear December day we may ask with the poet, "What then so cheerful as the holly tree?"—with its varnished leaves and glittering coral berries. A fifteenth-century carol describes the holly and the ivy as rivals, and holly is given the place of honour within the hall, while ivy stands without the door, and "she is full sore a-cold." To praise holly still higher, the carol declares that she is attended by flocks of birds, and goes on to ask, "Good Ivy, what birds hast thou?" answering, "None but the Howlet, that cries, 'How, how!'" (The old name of the owl was howlet.) But ivy is, in truth, by far better loved by the birds than holly. Apart from the wood-owls which roost in ivy-clumps, hosts of starlings, pigeons and thrushes are attracted to the ivy's berries when they ripen in spring, and are as black as sloes. Showers of pinkish berries then often fall down the chimneys of country houses, the seeds of ivy as dropped by starlings, which have been feasting on ivy-wreathed chimneys. Holly berries are bitter, and it is remarkable that a well-laden bush is often entirely neglected by the birds through winter and spring.

The holly's truest bird lovers may be the mistle-thrushes. As early as October a pair of these fine birds sometimes will take possession of a holly, and wage tremendous battles as they hold the fort against all comers. The cock divides his days between holly berry feasts, and driving off other birds—the sharp-flying little titmice give him a deal of trouble—and singing songs of triumph. When the hard, bitter berries have been mellowed by frost they come into more general favour, especially when other food is scarce. Then all the thrush tribe and many a little titmouse will seem to be echoing the brave words, "Heigh-ho, the holly—this life is most jolly!"

We should spare a thought for the bird when gathering holly and mistletoe for Christmas decorations. One bitter Christmas day a pathetic sight was seen in the burial-ground of a country chapel—a blackbird eagerly pecking at a wreath of artificial holly berries: all the berried sprays from bushes about had been taken for decoration.

It is reasonable to suppose that mistletoe berries are the natural right of the thrush named from his liking thereof—the mistle- or mistletoe-thrush. Certainly it is probable that the spray of mistletoe we may hang in our hall at Christmas was planted by a mistle-thrush—one which had been feeding on the berries on a day of spring, and then wiped his beak clean against a branch, and so set the seeds in a crack in the bark. It was a deed which deserves a kindly thought when we gather round the Yule log.

And out of doors, a washing storm o'erwhelms

Nature pitch-dark, and rides the thundering elms.

The Turn of the Year.

Animal life is now at a low ebb. Many creatures are sleeping, if not snoring, in burrows, nests, holes in trees, and among the rafters of old roofs. The hedgehog is curled in a blanket of leaves in a dry ditch. Bats are folded in sleep in their leathery wings. Dormice will not stir for three months to come. But before December goes out, we may see signs of the turn of winter's tide. At night, in quiet countrysides, we may hear the sharp, three-fold bark of the fox as he roams the woods and dales in quest of a mate, for Christmas ushers in the foxes' courting time. Then we hear the mellow hooting of the wood-owls, which never call more melodiously than at Christmas, and we cannot doubt that they too are courting. Or there rings out the long-drawn, eerie scream of the white owl, most mysterious and unearthly of all the sounds of our woods and wolds in mid-winter.

In places, bird life is abundant. River estuaries are alive with congregations of gulls, waders, and wild-fowl. Cornstacks always have life to show in a warm rick-yard on the hardest December day.

January is named from the heathen two-headed god, Janus, who looked backward as well as forward. We may be inclined to look backward on New Year's Eve, but better than the way of the heathen god is the Christian ideal of looking forward, in certain hope that "the best is yet to be."

This Month's Thought.

We live by hope
And by desire; we see by the glad light
And breathe the sweet air of futurity;
And so we live, or else we have no life.

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